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ISSUE NO. 4

FIRST LOOK

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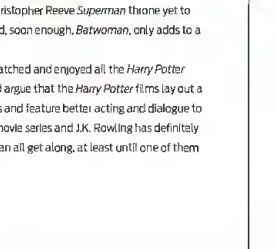
Geeky Hand-Me-Downs

ONE OF THE GREAT THINGS ABOUT BECOMING AN ADULT GEEK is passing your geek wisdom and geek legacy on to your children. Of course, you know at some point they're going to reject all of that and do everything they can to become the opposite of what you are, but at least for a few magical years, you and your offspring can share each other's nerdy interests and marvel at how much you have in common.

My son, Logan (he's not the only geek offspring you'll hear from in this issue), is way into *Minecraft*, *Fortnite*, *Bey Blades* and a bunch of other stuff I can't really get my mind or my arthritic hands around (my last hardcore video game playing took place in the arcade at my college's student union in the early 1980s, playing Atari's *Tempest* and *Star Wars*, Midway's *Tron* and Sega's *Star Trek*), but there are places where our interests meet. One of them is The CW's DC universe TV shows. I never paid attention to *Arrow* (although editorial consultant Mark Altman has binged the entire series on Blu-ray with his wife and tells me it's terrific), but Logan wanted to watch *The Flash* when it debuted a few seasons ago, and *The Flash* was one of the old DC comics I read as a kid. I wasn't excited about The CW's usual formula of glam teen romance but I gave it a shot and, to my shock, the show's first season turned out to be the best TV adaptation of a comic book hero I'd ever seen, especially with its loving homages to the 1990s *Flash* show starring John Wesley Shipp.



The Flash managed to embrace both *The X-Files*-like appeal of sinister "meta-humans" threatening Barry Allen and his pals as well as the light-hearted goofiness that made the DC world so appealing to me as a kid, so it hit the sweet spot for both me and my 8-year-old son.

Since then, The CW has fleshed out its DC universe with shows that are often legitimately hilarious (*DC's Legends of Tomorrow*, with characters like Brandon Routh's The Atom, as well as Hawkman and others) and sometimes surprisingly moving (*Supergirl*, with Melissa Benoist as a perfect version of Superman's cousin, is probably the most legitimate heir to the Christopher Reeve *Superman* throne yet to wear a cape). And the addition of characters like *Black Lightning* and, soon enough, *Batwoman*, only adds to a tremendously satisfying comic book world on TV.

And although I wouldn't exactly call him a muggle, my son has watched and enjoyed all the *Harry Potter* movies and has a nice, light-up Harry Potter wand to call his own. I'd argue that the *Harry Potter* films lay out a far richer and more consistent mythology than the *Star Wars* movies and feature better acting and dialogue to boot. Of course, it helps to have a good, literary underpinning for a movie series and J.K. Rowling has definitely provided that with her novels. So, see? Adult and childhood geeks can all get along, at least until one of them gets on Instagram.

Jeff Bond
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
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PUBLISHER
Steve B. Harris

EDITORIAL

EDITOR
Jeff Bond

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
Mark A. Altman

SENIOR EDITOR
Edward Gross

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Marc Camron

COPY EDITOR
Milla Goldenberg

LOS ANGELES BUREAU CHIEF
Alexandra August

CONTRIBUTORS
Matt Cabral
Kate Swan
Isaac Altman

ART DIRECTION
TI TONG

EGM MEDIA, LLC
8840 Wilshire Blvd.,
Third Floor
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
www.egmmediagroup.com

CEO
Steve Harris

LEGAL
Bob Wyman

ACCOUNTING
Oz Abregov

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Jeff Eisenberg

ADVERTISING MANAGER
Elizabeth Scott

FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
800-875-6298, ext. 120
adsales@egmnow.net

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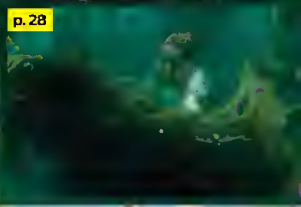

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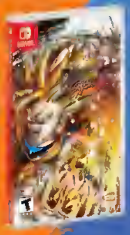

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ArcadeIUp Gets Your Game On

By the GEEK Staff

IF YOU'VE BEEN SPENDING SLEEPLESS NIGHTS pining away for those glory days of the 1980s when you were the kingpin of your local video game arcade, it's time to bring those memories back to life with painstakingly authentic recreations of those standup arcade consoles. ArcadeIUp arcades stand just under 4 feet tall and feature the same commercial grade construction as the games you used to play—but those old raster and vector graphics have been jazzed up with eye-grabbing hi-res displays and sounds. Coinless operation means you don't have to constantly fish around for quarters or game tokens, while the original joysticks and control buttons will recreate the exact same gripping play action that kept you coming back to the arcade night after night.

ArcadeIUp features many of your favorite, original arcade games—the spaceship armada barrage action of *Galaga*, the whirling antigravity shoot-'em-up *Asteroids*, the martial arts choreography of *Street Fighter II*, the apocalyptic nuclear assault *Missile Command*, the dizzying, geometric shooter *Tempest*, NASA training game *Lunar Lander*, *Joust* and more. All these games are brought back with their original artwork and décor to look exactly like the games you used to play back in your arcade days, and the four-foot height makes them the perfect size for your office, dorm room or home. But just in case the miniature size reminds you too much that you're a lot older now, you can add a convenient riser that boosts the console another foot in height and allows you to play standing up like the adult you are.

Some ArcadeIUp consoles feature two-player or even three-player joystick/button configurations that allow you to play against your friends or against the console's A.I. Each console also features multiple game versions—for example, the *Street Fighter II* version features *Street Fighter II: Champion Edition*, *Street Fighter II: The New Challengers*, and *Street Fighter II Turbo*. Each console boasts a 17" LCD color screen, on-screen game selection menu and adjustable volume so you can play all night without driving your roommates—or your relatives—crazy.

ArcadeIUp consoles are the perfect way to revisit the gameplay that started your video game habit, or to introduce your kids to the

> COINLESS OPERATION MEANS YOU DON'T HAVE TO CONSTANTLY FISH AROUND FOR QUARTERS OR GAME TOKENS

games you loved when you were their age. With six consoles to choose from, you can settle on your favorite or collect more than one and set up a game arcade of your own. Just plug them into the nearest AC outlet and you're ready to start shooting, punching and blocking.

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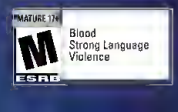

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Fall Into Ultra Gear

GREAT WAYS TO EXPERIENCE 4K THIS AUTUMN

By the editors of GEEK

Xiaomi Mi Box Android TV

If you're married to your Android phone you might like the way the Mi Box Android TV puts Google's Android TV operating system on your television, giving you access to streaming apps like Netflix, HBO, Showtime, Youtube and more as well as live TV channels like ESPN, Disney, CBS Sports and CNN through Sling TV. Google Cast allows you to share TV shows, movies and music from your compatible phone, tablet or laptop directly to your big screen TV, and you can control it all with built-in Google voice search. You can rent, buy or watch movies on Vudu (the Box conveniently comes with a $5 credit), and the booklet of special offers adds up to over $70 worth of additional value.

Samsung 4K Ultra-HD Blu-ray & DVD Player

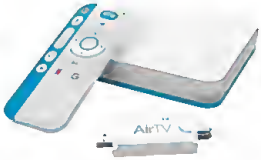
While there are a lot of great streaming devices floating around, you can often combine all your home theater needs into gadgets like this Samsung UBD-M7500 player that allows you to spin regular DVDs, Blu-rays and 4K Ultra HD discs to get four times the detail you'll get in regular HD, as well as the expanded color spectrum (64 times greater than the standard for digital cinema) and all the HDR image detail that 4K promises. The enhanced Ultra HD tech even optimizes the look from DVD and non-UHD Blu-rays, while built-in Ethernet connectivity gives you access to free and pay-TV streaming content through Samsung's Smart Hub.

Roku Ultra 4K

The new Roku Premiere+ for HD and 4K Ultra HD TVs employs a superfast quad-core processor for the smoothest streaming experience to give you blazing 4K resolution at 60fps for stunningly bright and realistic images, with high dynamic range color for intense blacks and brilliant highlights. The streaming platform gives you access to more than 350,000 movies and TV episodes across 3,500+ paid or free channels, including Vudu, and the point-anywhere remote ensures that you can do it all without leaving your couch in the highest consumer resolution possible.

Apple TV 4K 64GB

If you can't bear to be separated from the world of Apple for one minute you can continue your Apple relationship even after you've left your laptop, iPhone and iPad locked up, just by adding Apple TV to your home theater. The Apple TV has upped its game to 4K with 64 gigs of storage, a remote so compact that no one will even know you're holding one, and features like the ability to share photos from your iPhone or iPad on your TV screen and to use Siri Remote for voice searches. As an added bonus, Apple TV 4K will instantly upgrade all your iTunes movies into UHD, if available.



AirTV 4K Streaming Media Player With Adapter

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NES - Nintendo Switch Online Rated

EVERYONE 10+

Fantasy Violence
Suggestive Themes

ESRB

Users Interact

By the editors of *GEEK*

5 SCARIEST HORROR BOOGEYMEN

THE BEST OF THE WORST WILL HAUNT YOUR HALLOWEEN NIGHTMARES

THEY ARE AMONG THE MOST TERRIFYING AND DEADLY KILLERS IN HORROR HISTORY. The boogeymen who go bump in the night and have populated our collective nightmares since the dawn of cinema. As we celebrate another year of Halloween horrors, *GEEK* pays tribute to the most memorable horror villains in cinema and TV history. And if you're courageous enough to pay them a visit, all these Halloween horrors are currently available on DVD, Blu-ray and for digital download from Vudu.

Norman Bates

PSYCHO – UMVD LABELS

We could shower Anthony Perkins' performance with praise as the troubled mama's boy, Norman Bates, in Alfred Hitchcock's suspense classic, but if you bed down for a night in the Bates Motel, chances are it'll be curtains for you forever. Norman returned to terrorize and be terrorized in two sequels, *Psycho II* and *Psycho III*, this time with Perkins himself behind the camera.

Alien Queen

ALIENS – FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT

This ultimate star wars had Sigourney Weaver's butt-kicking Ripley going "womano e womano" with the most deadly and malevolent mama since Norman Bates' mother in *Psycho*. The vengeful xenomorph that incubated the colonists on LV-426 gets shown the door, literally, after a brutal conflagration in space onboard the U.S.S. Sulaco.

Jason Vorhees

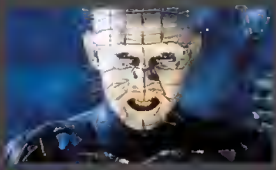
FRIDAY THE 13TH SERIES – PARAMOUNT USHE

This mama's boy has chopped and fileted his way through summer camp, Manhattan, Hell and even Space while slicing and dicing campers, coeds and even Freddy Krueger in one of horror's most meta mashups. Wearing his iconic hockey mask, this is one horror boogeyman who is always "killing it" and not leaving many happy campers behind — or alive.

Freddy Krueger

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET SERIES – WARNER HOME VIDEO

Aside from Michael Jackson, there's probably no better known one-glove wonder than this former janitor who was torched in a high school boiler room and now haunts the dreams of Elm Street's teenagers. Like Wolverine, you need to watch out when his claws come out, as they are almost as sharp as his puns. See what we did there?



Pinhead

HELLRAISER/HELLBOUND: HELLRAISER II – LIONSGATE/ARTISAN

What's in the box? That's a question you don't want answered because when you play with the mysterious puzzle box in Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* series, you're likely to unlock the demonic Cenobites who rise from hell to torture the living. None are more memorably chilling than Pinhead himself, played with singular menace by Doug Bradley.

Pennywise

IT: CHAPTER ONE – WARNER HOME VIDEO

No more clowning around. After years of mediocre Stephen King movies, the terrifying Pennywise, played by a menacing Bill Skarsgård in the 2017 blockbuster reminded a generation why they fear the red, white and boo. And he'll be back for seconds in *It: Chapter Two* next year.

Hannibal Lecter

MANHUNTER/SILENCE OF THE LAMBS/ HANNIBAL – MGM HOME VIDEO

Take your pick and chill out with horror's most cerebral villain, some fava beans and a nice chianti. Whether portrayed by a creepy Brian Cox in Michael Mann's gritty *Manhunter* or Anthony Hopkins as the terrifying and insightful anti-hero who assists Clarice Starling in her investigation in *Silence of the Lambs* or, most recently, the creepy Mads Mikkelsen in Bryan Fuller's grotesque grand guignol TV classic, *Hannibal*, Doctor Lecter, in all his many incarnations is truly the stuff nightmares are made of.

The Shape

HALLOWEEN – ANCHOR BAY ENTERTAINMENT

Thirty years ago, John Carpenter's *Halloween* ushered in a new age of horror with this classic slasher film. His low-budget 1978 thriller became a holiday perennial (spawning numerous sequels, Rob Zombie's re-imagining as well as the upcoming film from David Gordon Green) and introduced the unstoppable bogeyman, Michael Myers, in a painted-over Captain Kirk holiday mask, terrorizing babysitters the same way *Jaws* scared bathers out of the water from fear of sharks a few years earlier.

The Creature from the Black Lagoon/Nosferatu (tie)

CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON COMPLETE LEGACY COLLECTION - UNIVERSAL

NOSFERATU – KINO VIDEO

We fear what we can't see, and horror has always been populated with myriad beasties that rise from the murky depths—from *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* to *Jaws*—but there may be no more terrifying ocean beast than the titular prehistoric creature of Jack Arnold's 1954 Universal classic, *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (which Universal is conveniently showcasing in a brand new legacy set of all three Creature features). And while Bela Lugosi's *Dracula* may be the most famous vampire of all time, it's Max Schreck as the creepy Count Orlok in Murnau's 1922 classic, *Nosferatu*, who takes the undead crown.

Mr. Hengist

STAR TREK – THE ORIGINAL SERIES – CBS HOME VIDEO

You might think there's nothing too scary about the mild-mannered John Fiedler as Mr. Hengist in the 1968 episode of the original *Star Trek*, "Wolf in the Fold." He's the spineless guy from the old *Bob Newhart Show*, right? But look again because the former voice of Piglet in *Winnie the Pooh* is actually one of the most vicious and misogynistic predators in Earth history as he is revealed to be the deadly serial killer, Jack the Ripper, who is actually an immortal, intergalactic murderer who thrives on fear. Redrum, indeed.

LEGO DC SUPER-VILLAINS TRADES **BATMAN AND ROBIN** FOR THE BAD GUYS

CUSTOMIZE YOUR OWN BLOCK-Y BAD GUY OR GAL IN THIS HILARIOUS BRICK-BUSTING ADVENTURE.

by Matt Cabral

LEGO'S POPULAR VIDEO GAMES HAVE always put players in the plastic shoes of iconic heroes, from Batman and Harry Potter to Indiana Jones and all those Jedi from a galaxy far, far away. The series' latest brick-smashing entry, however, is letting fans dance on the dark side.

Dubbed *LEGO DC Super-Villains*, the upcoming entry is dedicated to the legendary comic book universe's rogues gallery. For fans, this means trading the caped crusader's gadgets and Superman's frosty breath for Lex Luthor's projectile laser, Harley Quinn's oversized hammer and Solomon Grundy's brute strength.

But these famed evil-doers are far from the only troublemakers in the game. *LEGO DC Super-Villains*' original story sees the Justice League missing in action, leaving a new group—called the Justice Syndicate—in charge of protecting mankind. The Joker and his scheming pals don't trust these supposed superheroes, though, leading them to take matters into their own hands. Packed with the potential for awesome minifig clashes, the promising premise pits our favorite bad guys against some even badder bad guys.

FUNNY FOES

For Arthur Parsons, head of design at developer TT Games, focusing on the Justice League's enemies isn't about showcasing their superpowers in epic evil-versus-evil bouts, but about shining the spotlight on their sense of humor. "We wanted to make the funniest LEGO game we've ever made. Villains trying to do stuff, whether heroically or not...they are such goofballs. No matter what they do, things are going to go wrong. They are just such great characters to sort of play with," shared a giddy Parsons.

Long before the franchise started using fully voiced characters, with 2012's *LEGO Batman 2: DC Super Heroes*, its pop culture-skewering avatar interactions and hilarious cut scenes were always a highlight. While kids enjoyed the accessible action, simple puzzles and endless opportunities to collect shiny studs, parents were equally entertained by the games' humor, charm and personality. With the latest installment, Parsons and his team are taking those traits to the next level.

"We wrote a story with DC to really play to the strengths of the villains and to put humor first and foremost. I think when people do get to play the game, if they aren't laughing out loud, I will be shocked." continued Parsons. "Having worked on a number of games that are entertaining and funny, I think we definitely achieved the target of making the funniest LEGO game."

BAD LOVE: An evil Superman, the Joker and Harley Quinn lead the flip side of the Justice League in *LEGO DC Super-Villains*.

CREATE YOUR OWN CRIMINAL

An industry veteran who's been with TT Games since the very first LEGO entry – 2005's *LEGO Star Wars: The Video Game*—Parsons has learned a lot over the years about what players like most about the series. On top of the lighthearted, yet whip-smart writing, the franchise's faithful following have always gravitated toward the entries that have allowed them some degree of freedom to tweak their characters. While the series has toyed with some limited character customization elements in the past, *LEGO DC Super-Villains* is, according to Parsons, the first entry that's giving fans the tools to fully create a character that's also an integral part of the story.

"The very first thing you do in the game is create a villain character," Parsons explains. "You can create them to look however you want them to look. You can change everything...colors, tints, powers, abilities." The depth of the customization feature, however, goes far beyond just letting players personalize their villains' looks, abilities, powers and accessories.

Using the game's simple beam attack—a power earned early in the story—as an example, Parsons hinted at just how far you can go with the system. "Once you unlock and apply the beam attack to your character, you're able to change the beam's color, its style and where it comes from; so you can have it come from the left hand, right hand, both hands or chest. You can even have it come from the player's eyes."

The prospect of shooting pink lasers from the face of our own DIY delinquent is pretty amazing, but it's still just scratching the surface. You'll begin the game by making your very own villain, but you'll also continue to upgrade the handmade menace throughout your climb up the criminal ladder. Playing through the story unlocks new powers, skills and cosmetic pieces, including some famous foes' favorite accessories. Unlock the Penguin, for example, and you'll gain access to his hat, cane, cape and grimacing face, complete with monocle, of course.

APE EVIL: Reverse Flash, Gorilla Grodd and Catwoman are just some of the 150 villains you can unleash.

Given the system's enormous depth and seemingly unlimited options—fueled by 150+unlockable characters—fans are welcome to create their own take on one of DC's "most wanted," come up with something entirely original or craft a thug that's more silly than sinister. Gadgets and gear unlocked along the way, like banana guns and corn-on-the-cob costumes, ensure imaginative players can craft an evil-doing avatar that's more in line with the game's side-splitting story. *LEGO DC Super-Villains*' local cooperative play feature also makes the option of partnering-up to create a not-so-dynamic duo an especially appealing prospect.

The ability to create and upgrade your own baddie should nicely complement the series' signature gameplay formula. As in previous entries, players can plan on assembling piles of jiggling bricks into puzzle-solving tools, collecting colorful studs aplenty and solving progress-blocking conundrums by swapping between characters. The focus will be on your handcrafted criminal, but you'll frequently switch between minifigs—of both the famous and cult-favorite variety—to carry out tasks, overcome obstacles and combat adversaries. Just in the main story alone, you'll take control of over 30 infamous avatars, including all aforementioned foes, as well as Cheetah, Riddler, Clayface and Scarecrow.

SUPER-VILLIANS ON SWITCH

FANS CAN PLAY *LEGO DC SUPER-VILLAINS* ON ALL THE USUAL SUSPECTS – PlayStation 4, Xbox One, PC—but this one feels like an especially good fit for the Nintendo Switch. Given the series' staple local cooperative play feature, friends and family can team-up on the TV or, even cooler, anywhere they bring the system.

Using the home/portable platform's handheld mode to experience a full console game on-the-go is nothing new, but *LEGO DC Super-Villains* not only separates itself by featuring single-screen co-op, but also by mapping all controls to a single JoyCon. So, much like *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe*, LEGO's latest is a full-on two-player experience requiring no extra Switch peripherals beyond what's bundled with the console. — M.C.

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Nintendo

LEGO ME THIS: The Riddler and The Scarecrow prepare for some LEGO mayhem.

FOR THE FANS

While the game's brimming slate of crooks should please both DC newcomers and longtime comic book fans, the latter camp will also appreciate the various call-outs to the wider universe layered into the adventure. LEGO games have always hidden plenty of Easter eggs in their brick-based worlds, but, according to Parsons, the latest installment is significantly upping the ante. "We pride ourselves on authenticity to the IP, so I think people are going to see, throughout the entire game, little Easter eggs, little bits and pieces and little nods to DC fandom they'll recognize." Fans should begin searching for this stuff as soon as they fire up the game, as Parsons promises no less than six call-outs just when the company's logo appears on-screen.

Many of these secrets can be discovered along the game's critical narrative path, but plenty more will be dug up in its sprawling open world. As longtime followers of the franchise are well aware, half the fun is exploring, collecting and experimenting with different characters, after the credits have rolled on the main story. *LEGO DC Super-Villains* is no different, sporting tons of optional activities and end-game content, much of it tucked away in its massive open world.

Regardless of which content players want to tackle beyond the main adventure, they'll be able to freely explore a vast and varied selection of environments, including Gotham City, Metropolis, Arkham Asylum, Mutant Mile, Smallville and Blackgate Penitentiary. Parsons also hints that some intel on the missing Justice League's whereabouts may be hidden in the post-game, suggesting those who typically stay just for the story mode should stick around.

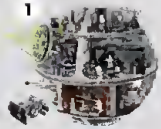
The LEGO series have always followed a comfortably familiar formula, offering reliable entertainment the whole family can enjoy. *LEGO DC Super-Villains* is aiming to retain those very elements that keep fans coming back, while also tweaking the tried-and-true template with some promising new elements and fresh features.

We look forward to building our own baddie and finding how good—and funny—it feels to be bad when *LEGO DC Super-Villains* unleashes its wacky wave of crime on PlayStation 4, Xbox One, PC and Nintendo Switch on October 16.

BRICK TO THE FUTURE

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL PLAY

1



LEGO Star Wars Death Star
That's no LEGO Moon, it's a LEGO Space Station. The Death Star is comprised of 4,015 pieces, which are easily destroyed by a proton torpedo placed in a small thermal exhaust port... or by a child dropping it on the floor. But at least you'll still have your 23 minifigures, including Grand Moff Tarkin, Darth Vader, Emperor Palpatine and Luke, Leia, Han and Chewie.

2

LEGO Hogwart's Castle
With over 6,000 LEGO bricks, you can school yourself at the home of higher learning in Harry Potter's world featuring over 27 microfigures from the Potterverse, including Harry, Hermione, Snape and He Who Shall Not Be Named.

3

LEGO Star Wars Millennium Falcon
Hey, it's the ship that made the Kessel Run in less than 8,000 pieces (7,541, to be exact). This remarkable, film accurate re-creation of the iconic Corellian Freighter is a LEGO classic and includes multiple minifigures, smuggling compartments, escape pods and a gunnery station.

4

LEGO 007 James Bond Aston-Martin
LEGO's first James Bond LEGO is part of its elite Creator Expert series. With over 1,290 LEGO blocks, the Aston Martin DB5 recaptures the elegance of the 1964 original first seen in *Goldfinger*. There's even an ejector seat. Joking? We never joke about our brick building, 007.

5

LEGO Marvel Superheroes: The SHIELD Helicarrier
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—LEGO selects by Isaac Altman

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PRIMETIME'S SUPER FRIENDS ARE BACK

by Edward Gross

WHEN IT COMES TO THE DECADES LONG MARVEL/DC rivalry, there's no question that, beyond comics sales, Marvel rules the big screen with one blockbuster after another while everyone else (well, primarily DC) tries to play catch up as best it can. But where the house that Superman built achieves much more in the way of parity is on the small screen, thanks largely to uber-producer Greg Berlanti and his slate of shows on the CW.

New seasons from the Justice League of Berlanti — *Arrow, The Flash, Supergirl, DC's Legends of Tomorrow* and *Black Lightning* — are upon us, picking up plot threads from where the previous seasons left off. Season six of *Arrow*, for example, ended with Oliver Queen (Stephen Amell) revealing his identity to the world and volunteering to go to prison to protect his teammates, who are forbidden by law to carry out vigilante justice. At the same time, crime lord Ricardo Diaz (Kirk Acevedo) is on the loose, vowing vengeance against Oliver and everyone Oliver cares about. As things commence, five months have passed between seasons.

"Oliver's not good," Amell offers. "He's in prison, he has no allies; he's not in control and, for him, that's bad. He really can't trust anyone. The thing that I really enjoyed playing in the premiere, at least, is that there's nothing heroic about him. It's kind of the exact opposite. There's one scene where he does the opposite of what you would expect from him, and the opposite of what you would hope that he would do." He pauses to let out a laugh, "I love that scene. It's so much fun."

Barry Allen (Grant Gustin) and Oliver Queen (Stephen Amell) plot strategy.

Arrow and *The Flash* are available on Blu-ray at Walmart and Walmart.com.

"You'll see Oliver like you've never [illegible] him before," concurs executive producer-showrunner [illegible] "All of our characters are kind of in a new role and trying to figure out how to save the city and honor Oliver's quest at the end of season 6. Also, this season is all about redemption for Oliver. Last season, unfortunately, they didn't end up getting [illegible] nt to prison, so he's kind of at the p[illegible]t where [illegible] to redeem his name a[illegible] [illegible]eem t[illegible] Green Arrow."

THE FLASH

THE FLASH'S FOURTH SEASON CONCLUDED WITH TEAM Flash defeating the Thinker—though not without a tremendous amount of sacrifice throughout the years—but then Barry Allen and Iris West-Allen are stunned to meet their near-adult speedster daughter, Nora, who has come from the future, claiming that she's really "messed" things up and needs their help.

Executive producer Todd Helbing comments, "I can tell you that there will be a direct pick-up from the finale last season. Nora came back from the future and dropped this massive bomb on them, so this year, thematically, we're exploring the idea of a legacy. What you leave behind for Barry and Iris and the team. Everybody has this sort of question that they're asking themselves, but for Barry, particularly, it's, 'What's more important: me being a great speedster, me being the Flash or me being a great father?' Barry has certainly messed up when he's traveled through time, so it's fun to have him on the other side of it and trying to help Nora get through this."

For his part, Grant Gustin, who plays the dual role of Barry Allen and The Flash, feels that his and Candice Patton's character of Iris West-Allen, were in a good place when they were suddenly given this bombshell of an adult daughter as the season ended. "Nora is a curveball," Gustin says, "but this isn't the craziest thing that's happened in terms of curveballs on the series."

"NORA IS A CURVEBALL," GUSTIN SAYS, "BUT THIS ISN'T THE CRAZIEST THING THAT'S HAPPENED IN TERMS OF CURVEBALLS ON THE SERIES."

As to what happens, he points out that it seemed that Nora was kind of avoiding Iris and was cold to her, and when things pick up she is particularly clingy toward her father. "Iris really wants to connect with her and is excited she's here," he says, "but Barry's a little more cautious at first, because, first of all, we've had people lie to us before and turn out not to be who they say they are. At the same time, we kind of both feel that it is her. Our guts tell us this is really our daughter, and Barry is kind of worried about helping her, why she's there and how to get her back to her own time.

"A kind of heartbreaking aspect of it is that Barry feels that he's had a lot robbed from him in life. His mom was murdered because of these powers and because of time travel, and that's why he grew up with his dad in prison. Now he's worried that his daughter showing up as a 24- or 25-year-old, it could be taking away from the future. He's always looked forward to having a kid, being there for the sonogram and for when she was born, and now he's worried about what this will affect. If she does the wrong thing, she could make it so she never exists in the future. So it's scary for him."

DC'S LEGENDS OF TOMORROW

DESTROYING THE DEMON MALLUS, THE Legends (that collection of superhero misfits who screw up about as often as they succeed) seem ready to bask in their success — until John Constantine (new series regular, Matt Ryan, who had previously played the character in his own series) arrives to tell them that they've created a much bigger problem: Magical creatures have been unleashed in this world. The result? History is infected with "fugitives" from other realms.

Phil Klemmer, executive producer and showrunner, notes that the arrival of Constantine means that they're changing up the genre of the show. "We're going from just fixing history to dealing with worlds of these magical creatures," he says. "Our show is a comedy in my mind, and to offset that kind of lighter tone we wanted to really get into some dark stories. I'm a big fan of the horror genre and the idea of mashing the comedy. There's a reason that people laugh when they get scared, and that's what we're dealing with this season. The show becomes more outrageous, more absurd, more preposterous as our finale was pretty much an explosion of everything. In order to sort of counterbalance that, we're trying to make a lot of the themes at the heart of the show much more real. We played arch villains, we played the Legion of Doom, we played Vandal Savage, and now we're kind of exploring the evil of humans. It doesn't sound like fun, but it is."

While Ryan isn't offering much in the way of details on the possible dramatic arc for Constantine, he does note, "John, wherever he goes, brings his bag of tricks, but he also brings his baggage and everything that he's been through. He's always kind of carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders, and what's great is being able to explore John's relationships with these characters in this context. From the comic books that I've read, there's all these different relationships he has which you can pull from, but these are relationships that are being discovered for the first time and that's probably the most exciting thing about it.

"Added to that," Ryan continues, "he's always got his own motives and his own agenda. And as we know, he will sacrifice his best friend for the greater good. So you drop John Constantine in the middle of *Legends of Tomorrow*, and obviously it's going to present some interesting problems. This man is notoriously not a team player. So how is putting him on this team going to work?

The answer to that question should be... uh, legendary.

Legends of Tomorrow is available on Blu-ray at Walmart and Walmart.com.

Legends' Ray Palmer (Brandon Routh) as the Atom impresses special guests Supergirl (Melissa Benoist) and *Arrow*'s Felicity Smoak (Emily Bett Rickards).

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SUPERGIRL

SEASON THREE OF *SUPERGIRL* DEALT WITH A battle with the World Killer Reign, though that story came to an end in the finale. According to Melissa Benoist, the actress behind Kara Danvers and *Supergirl*, based on the scripts she's read so far, this season is going to be more topical and more grounded in reality, in terms of the state of the world today, using National City as a microcosm.

Part of that has to do with new additions to the show's cast, including April Parker Jones as Colonel Haley, described as a "hardline career military woman"; David Ajala as Manchester Black, referred to as "the type of guy who brings a knife to a gunfight and still walks away the winner"; and, perhaps most importantly, transgender activist Nicole Maines (who played an integral role in allowing trans individuals to use the restroom of their choice) as Nia Nal, a reporter for the CatCo media company, who will be "a soulful young transgender woman with a fierce drive to protect others." Her journey this coming year will see Nia fulfill her destiny as the superhero Dreamer (an ancestor of the Legion of Superheroes' Dreamgirl).

"I'm really excited about Nia Nal in more ways than one," Benoist explains. "Not just for what Nicole's meant to people, and the story she'll be telling and how inspiring she'll be, but Kara and Nia's relationship is very special already in the scripts that I've seen. And it almost purely exists in the CatCo offices right now. Since Cat Grant [the former head of CatCo] is gone, Kara kind of steps in and acts as a mentor in the same way that Cat was for her, which is something that we've not really seen Kara do — act as a mentor to a younger girl. Kara's always been kind of learning the lessons, and she'll continue to do that, but it's nice to see her affect someone younger. I'm excited for Nicole and for what she could mean to people. I'm excited for these records that she's breaking and how important it's going to be for young people to see that."

"I'M JUST ALWAYS LOOKING TO FIND MORE WAYS OF HER BEING EMPOWERED AS A WOMAN."

Which is not to say that there isn't going to be the requisite superheroics. At the end of last season, Supergirl saved the day by defeating Reign, but in the process created a double of herself, who showed up in Siberia. This is a take on a "Superman" comic called "Red Son," which suggests what would have happened had the character landed in Russia instead of the U.S.

The characters from last season, including James Olsen, Supergirl, Mon-El and his wife, Kara's mother and stepsister—all due for a shakeup this year.

Benoist muses, "I think that in the way the first 'Red Son' explored the differences between two doppelgängers, men who were raised in two very different areas of the world with different cultures and ideals, that's what we're going to explore. How two people with such extraordinary abilities, how differently they would use them if they were from different places. It's going to be a really cool experiment in nature vs. nurture. I think it's going to be a slow burn, but I'm excited to see where it goes."

Supergirl is available on Blu-ray at Walmart and Walmart.com.

Benoist has two distinct points she wants to make about the show in general and the direction things are moving in. "With the first transgender superhero," she says, "I think it's the perfect time to show inclusivity and love and acceptance and understanding, and tell people's stories that aren't always told. And for Kara, I'm just always looking to find more ways of her being empowered as a woman."

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DC'S GREATEST SUPERHERO FIGHTS

FROM BELFRY BATTLES TO CITY SMASHING

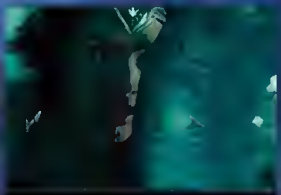
by the GEEK staff

SUPERGIRL VS. REIGN

SUPERGIRL: THE COMPLETE THIRD SEASON

(WARNER HOME VIDEO)

The CW's *Supergirl* has been hit-or-miss as far as comic book action goes, especially with Supergirl's off-again-on-again romance with Mon-El (Chris Wood). But last season's Reign arc produced a superhero slugfest that can stand along with the greatest ever put on film, as Supergirl (Melissa Benoist) takes on "worldkiller" Reign (Odette Annable) in a fantastically kinetic brawl that sends the pair through buildings and has a beaten-down Supergirl warding off blows from Reign, who wields a makeshift sledgehammer made out of rebar and cement. Brutal!



WONDER WOMAN VS. WWI

WONDER WOMAN

(WARNER HOME VIDEO)

Wonder Woman long seemed an impossible nut to crack for superhero movie-makers until director Patty Jenkins inherited Gal Gadot from *Batman v Superman* and created the most earnest and upliftting superhero movie since Richard Donner's 1978 *Superman*. Gadot's *Wonder Woman* doesn't face down villains so much as war itself in the movie, which may be why her first sortie into No Man's Land in the middle of World War I became the most crowd-pleasing superhero movie scene in years. She's not so much fighting as she is protecting.

BATMAN VS. LARGE JOKER HENCHMAN

BATMAN

(WARNER HOME VIDEO)

We know, we know — what about Batman vs. Bane? The Chris Nolan *Batman* films are technical masterpieces but we still dig the bravura fight in the belfry between Michael Keaton's Batman and the Joker's largest henchman (George Lane Cooper) near the end of Tim Burton's 1989 *Batman*. Largely choreographed by underrated second unit director Peter MacDonald, It's a masterpiece of camerawork — as the POV dodges around a massive, swinging bell — mixed with stunts, editing and Danny Elfman's insane, big top music.

SUPERMAN VS. PHANTOM ZONE VILLAINS

SUPERMAN II

(WARNER HOME VIDEO)

Cinema's first true superhero throw-down came at the climax of this sequel to the 1978 *Superman*, which has Kryptonian villains Zod (Terence Stamp), Ursa (Sarah Douglas) and Non (Jack O'Halloran) tearing apart Metropolis to get at the Man of Steel (Christopher Reeve). The special effects may look primitive now but the star-turning performances and story keep this gripping even today.

SUPERMAN VS. FAORA-UL

MAN OF STEEL

(WARNER BROS. HOME VIDEO)

Controversial opinion: Superman's fight in *Smallville* with Antje Traue's evil Kryptonian Faora-Ul is more fun to watch than the city-smashing climax with Henry Cavill's Man of Steel taking on Michael Shannon's one-note Zod. Traue clearly enjoys every lip-smacking moment of taunting and attacking Superman and the U.S. military, making her small-scale fight scene better than the movie's apocalyptic finale.

SUPERMAN VS. BATMAN

BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE

(WARNER HOME VIDEO)

How does Batman possibly fight Superman? That's a question we were all asking during the trailer for this follow-up to *Man of Steel*, and thanks to director Zack Snyder and writers David S. Goyer and Chris Terrio we actually figure it out. Ben Affleck is at his absolute best as a mercilessly determined Batman who uses every piece of kryptonite tech and dirty trick to go after the Man of Steel. If only it hadn't ended with that whole "mom" coincidence.

Nintendo

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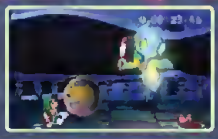

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EVERYONE E ESRB Mild Cartoon Violence

THERE'S NO PLAY LIKE IT

NEWT SHOOT

FROM *HARRY POTTER* TO *FANTASTIC BEASTS* AND BACK AGAIN

by Edward Gross

J.K. ROWLING WAS TRUE TO HER WORD: From the very start she claimed that there would be only seven *Harry Potter* novels, and so far that's all there have been. Of course, those seven books begat eight film adaptations, a Broadway and West End sequel in the form of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* and, now, a whole new film franchise in the form of *Fantastic Beasts*, the second installment of which, *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald*, reaches theaters on November 16.

The concept of *Fantastic Beasts* actually had its beginnings as a textbook at Hogwarts in the *Potter* novels and films, and it should come as no surprise to anyone who knows her that the author spent a lot of time developing that textbook, bringing it to life in her mind first.

"During the writing of that textbook," begins Rowling, who wrote the screenplays for these films rather than having them adapted by others as she's done previously, "I became quite interested in the ostensible author, Newt Scamander. Of all the characters in *Potter* who were just a name, he was the one who took on quite a bit of life in my mind. Newt's been traveling the world, studying magical creatures. His ambition is he wants to write *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. He wants people to understand how remarkable these magical creatures are, and he wants to educate the public and stop them killing them. A very laudable design, one would say, but Newt being Newt, he can't resist if you find something that's injured or endangered, taking it with him. So over time, this case he carries has become effectively a portable animal hospital/safari park for endangered species."

Actor Eddie Redmayne, who plays Newt, elaborates, "He believes—as he sees the wonder and the brilliance in these animals—that the wizarding community, with the proper education, could learn to live side by side with them and appreciate how extraordinary they are. So he travels around the world researching his book and collecting these animals."

Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald picks up following events of the first film. The Dark Wizard Gellert Grindelwald (Johnny Depp, not to be confused with Ralph Fiennes' dark wizard, Voldemort) was captured by the Magical Congress of the United States (who knew?) with Newt's help. But now he has escaped custody and is gathering followers, none of them aware that his ultimate goal is to have pure-blood wizards ruling over all non-magical beings. Standing in his way? Jude Law's Albus Dumbledore and his former student, Newt.

David Yates, who so far has directed four *Harry Potter* films and both *Fantastic Beasts*,

comments, "Johnny Depp appeared very fleetingly in the first film, but he's wonderful. He's a gifted actor who has a fearless approach to his work. He's ambitious and wants to go to some strange, wonderful places, which makes him perfect for Grindelwald."

As to the character of Grindelwald himself, he adds, "He's a dark wizard, a very gifted wizard with a very dangerous ideology. He had a relationship with Dumbledore—a very close relationship—which we'll explore in the later films."

What's to come in those later films—we expect there to be a total of five—is anybody's guess, but what we do know is that *Fantastic Beasts* truly does owe its existence to the rich tapestry of *Harry Potter*. For that reason, we're delving into the past to take a look back at the entire *Potter* film saga—from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* through *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part 2*—with cast and crew, whose views are presented in written history format.

HARRY POTTER FILM ROUNDUP

HARRY POTTER FILM ROUNDUP

HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE (2001)

LIKE THE NOVEL THAT INSPIRED IT, the film chronicles Harry's rescue from his neglectful aunt and uncle and his arrival at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. There he discovers that he is destined for greatness, while simultaneously discovering his connection with ultimate darkness.

DAVID HEYMAN (PRODUCER): "I'd been looking for a subject matter that would appeal to audiences in both Europe and the United States. I thought Harry Potter was a wonderful idea, which turned out to be an even more remarkable book."

CHRIS COLUMBUS (DIRECTOR): "To me, the movie is a companion piece to the book. My goal was to involve Jo Rowling as a collaborator. She never came in with a sledgehammer and said, 'This must be done this way, you need to do this.'"

J.K. ROWLING: "Chris Columbus made me two promises. That it would be an all-British cast, and that he would keep it as true to the book as was possible within the constraints of film. He kept both promises."

DAVID HEYMAN: "Finding the right actors to play the characters was a very big challenge. It was not easy to find a boy who embodied the many qualities of Harry Potter. We wanted someone who could combine a sense of wonder and curiosity, the sense of having lived a life, having experienced pain: an old soul in a child's body."

CHRIS COLUMBUS: "We had auditioned hundreds of actors for the role of Harry, but with little luck. Then, the first casting director, in a fit of total frustration, threw up her arms and said, 'I just don't know what you want!' Sitting on a shelf in the office was a video copy of *David Copperfield*, starring Daniel Radcliffe. I picked up the video box, pointed to Dan's face and said, 'This is who I want! This is Harry Potter.'"

The *Harry Potter* movie series is available in 4K at Walmart and Walmart.com.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE (ACTOR, "HARRY POTTER"): "I had to go on three auditions and two or three screen tests. I remember thinking, 'There are a million boys auditioning and I know I won't get it.' I was in the bath one day and my dad picked up the phone. I hear him say, 'Hello, David.' My dad came upstairs and I thought it was going to be a letdown call to say that I didn't get the part. But he came upstairs and told me, and I just sat there for a while to let it sink in. I just started to cry, because I was so happy. There's no words for it, really."

EMMA WATSON (ACTRESS; "HERMIONE GRANGER"): "I had an audition at my school. I think I ended up doing over five auditions. I tried to enjoy it instead of desperately trying for it. I found out that I had gotten the part when David Heyman invited Rupert Grint and me to come in. We sat down in his office—all very casual—and he said, 'You've got the part.' I couldn't believe it, because I was expecting someone to get the part who had professional acting experience."

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HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS (2002)

WHILE THE HOPE WAS THAT EACH OF J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels would be turned into films, in the beginning no one could know whether the audience would go for the idea of a film series. Still, Warner Bros. hedged its bets by planning on at least two that would be produced no matter what, thus ensuring adaptations of *The Sorcerer's Stone* and *The Chamber of Secrets*.

DAVID HEYMAN: "We devoted a good part of *Sorcerer's Stone* to setting up the world of *Harry Potter*. There was so much to introduce in terms of the magic, the settings and the characters. With *Chamber of Secrets*, we jump directly into the narrative and into the adventure."

CHRIS COLUMBUS: "The first film was about Harry realizing that he's actually a wizard. In contrast to the colorful and larger-than-life characters that surrounded him, Harry was somewhat passive and didn't come into his own until the third act of the film. In *Chamber of Secrets*, Harry exudes a lot more confidence and strength right from the start."

DAVID HEYMAN: "One of the wonders of this process for me has been to witness the maturation of Dan, Rupert and Emma. The children seem more confident and able to draw upon a wealth of new experience for their characters. Yet, at the same time, they have maintained their enthusiasm, sense of wonder and their youthfulness."

CHRIS COLUMBUS: "We knew we weren't going to get fired on the second film, so it was a good experience. The first time around, honestly, I got on the set every day and

thought I was going to be fired. The kids were terrified, because Rupert and Emma had never been on a set before. Rupert couldn't stop looking in the camera the first couple of days of shooting *Sorcerer's Stone*. Suddenly, after 150 days of what was almost this acting workshop, they got confidence, they became accustomed to 250 people on the set."

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HARRY POTTER AND THE
PRISONER OF AZKABAN
(2004)

It's a time of change for the students of Hogwarts as they're getting older and, despite the magical setting they find themselves in, they are dealing with real-world issues. Voldemort is getting stronger and Harry discovers that his godfather, Sirius Black, who had been framed and imprisoned for a crime he did not commit, has broken free from Azkaban prison. Stepping in as director was Alfonso Cuarón.

CHRIS COLUMBUS: "I chose not to direct in order to spend time with my kids while they were young. I felt it was an important time for me to be there, but I wanted to stick around for three films to make sure that there is a good transition for the actors in the film."

DAVID HEYMAN: "A lot of the foundations have been built by Chris and Alfonso Cuarón embraced that on *Azkaban*, yet I think we as a franchise had to continue to allow directors to make their own films. It's really important that each director is able to put his or her own stamp on a film."

DANIEL RADCLIFFE: "I think everything that we learned from Chris, we were now able to put into practice with a different director. I think the reason Alfonso was able to do longer takes and was able to do more complicated shots was because with Chris we just didn't have the experience or the focus to do that kind of stuff. And it is harder, it's more challenging—which is good, because if we're getting older and we're not being challenged, then there's no point in doing it, really.

RUPERT GRINT: "Chris always had this fantastically energetic approach to doing the scenes, which suited the first two films absolutely perfectly. He made two absolutely fantastic films. With the third one, Alfonso has a much more kind of laidback, emotional, intense way of directing."

EMMA WATSON: "As someone who hasn't acted in anything else before, it was great working with a new director and doing something different, seeing different techniques, different ideas. A lot of himself goes into what he's doing and you can tell the difference."

HARRY POTTER AND THE

GOBLET OF FIRE (2005)

THE TRIWIZARD TOURNAMENT, a Yuletide Ball at Hogwarts, a fire-breathing dragon, deadly mermaids, the ever-growing power of Voldemort and the first signs of teen love are among the many things that Harry Potter deals with — plus, behind the camera was new director Mike Newell.

MIKE NEWELL (DIRECTOR): "What I did was simply to make a film of the book that I had, which was appropriate to 14- and 15-year-old children. That's what makes the difference. It isn't that you say to yourself, 'Well, there are visual rules here we have to follow and extend.' You simply say, 'What is the internal emotional life of a 14-year-old?' And what happens to him can be tougher because he's tougher himself. Naturally, the challenges grow harder. They were adolescents, adults in training."

STEVE KLOVES (SCREENWRITER): "With *Goblet of Fire*, we came close to splitting the book into two films. We thought we were doing two films for a while. David Heyman and I ended up having four months of phone conversations about the pros and cons of one versus two. I always liked the idea of two conceptually, but you wanted to make sure we could do it the right way."

MIKE NEWELL: "I wouldn't have done them if it had been two movies, because there's enough detail and texture for two films, but there isn't enough story for two films."

EMMA WATSON: "Much to her surprise, Hermione gets herself a boyfriend in Viktor Krum. This proves to be a huge shock for Harry and Ron, particularly Ron, who has only just realized that Hermione is a girl."

RUPERT GRINT: "We've always had the sense that there is something growing between Ron and Hermione, although neither are really aware of it. In this film, both begin to admit it to themselves. When Hermione turns up at the Yule Ball with Viktor Krum, Ron finally realizes that he has feelings for her."

DANIEL RADCLIFFE: "One of the things I've always liked about Harry is that he is absolutely pathetic when it comes to the whole romance thing. He's a fantastic hero and he's brave and strong and loyal and trustworthy, and he's the greatest friend, but he's just bad with girls. He has no clue how to behave around them. He's a character for anyone who has ever felt awkward around girls. He just can't think of the right things to say when he's with Cho."

RALPH FIENNES (ACTOR, "VOLDEMORT"): "I wanted my portrayal of Voldemort to be deeply, truly evil. That comes from fear, frustration, unhappiness. Voldemort was a rejected child. He had a very unhappy childhood and that's where his anger, jealousy and hatred began to fester."

MIKE NEWELL: "When you're dealing with an 'ultimate evil,' you really do have to walk a fine line. If the actor is going to choose to chew scenery, then people are simply going to think of him as some sort of Victorian figure of fun, and he mustn't be that. He's got to chill the blood. Ralph Fiennes is absolutely real and cold and chilling and absolutely dedicated to doing bad. As soon as you have that, you can do anything."

HARRY POTTER AND THE
ORDER OF THE PHOENIX
(2007)

ALBUS DUMBLEDORE IS REMOVED FROM THE seat of power at Hogwarts and replaced by the twisted and evil Dolores Umbridge. For her part, Umbridge does everything she can to discredit Harry's claims of seeing Voldemort, while simultaneously weakening the position of those who would oppose the dark lord. Harry must find the strength to lead his fellow students in battle against Voldemort's followers.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE: "The books for me are not about magic or good or evil. To me, the story is about a loss of innocence. That's what Harry's evolution is—he goes from being this young boy awestruck by the magical world to a young man very much aware of the awful things that people can do to each other, even in the magical world, which at first he views as utopia. He thinks it's paradise, but he wakes up to the fact that actually really horrible things happen there."

MICHAEL GOLDENBERG (SCREENWRITER): "What Harry has to go through, purely in terms of his own emotions, his own demons, his own challenges, his own anger, confusion and sense of isolation is what propels the story. He goes from being somebody who's got some very tough choices to make and somebody who's an outsider at the beginning, and through the process of confronting Umbridge, through realizing he has a responsibility to help teach the other kids to defend themselves as he becomes the leader of Dumbledore's Army, by the end of the film he becomes a leader."

EMMA WATSON: "David Yates, our director, would not settle for anything that looks like acting. What kept coming up a lot is his search for truth in the characters and the performances. He really wanted it to be real. The fourth film was sort of about all of the tasks, fighting dragons and all of that. This film is about Harry fighting his inner demons more than dragons. It's about the emotional journey. So, I think David was the perfect director for that."

DAVID YATES (DIRECTOR): "Harry is having to deal with the whole issue of whether or not he's being corrupted and been made bad by this connection he has with Voldemort. It's classical. This film looks at the very emotional and turbulent time when you're growing up and suddenly questioning everything about the world. You're also discovering the world is quite a complex and complicated place, and all the adults around you don't necessarily have all the answers."

MICHAEL GOLDENBERG: "Harry spending time in Voldemort's mind is terrifying, and then when that's reversed, it's incredibly frightening. Intense and emotionally harrowing. So, there's a weird kind of intimacy that begins to develop between the two of them because of that connection, and it somehow makes it even more scary."

HARRY POTTER AND THE
HALF-BLOOD PRINCE (2009)

THINGS START OFF MORE WHIMSICALLY than usual as romance begins to blossom at Hogwarts, with feelings growing between Hermione and Ron — temporarily sidetracked by the adoration of Lavender Brown — and Harry and Ginny Weasley recognizing their own attraction. It isn't long, however, before the threat of Voldemort takes center stage.

DAVID YATES: "The romantic elements are really key to it — Harry's unrequited feelings for Ginny Weasley, and the relationship that develops between Hermione and Ron is delightful and funny and tender and true. There's a sort of universality to the kind of way those romantic engagements or unrequited moments play out."

EMMA WATSON: "Hermione's part in *Half-Blood Prince* has very much to do with her relationship with Ron, and this kind of new girl who comes on the scene called Lavender, who has a bit of a crush on him. It kind of looks as though, in the beginning of the film, that Hermione and Ron are going to finally get it together, and then Lavender kind of steps in and Ron, as usual, is hugely insensitive and quite mean, really. So, it's very much about how much she despises Lavender, who's played by Jessie Cave, not only because she's taken Ron away, but because she's kind of the opposite of Hermione. It's very comical and also quite sad for Hermione."

RUPERT GRINT: "The romantic scene in this film was OK to shoot, because me and Jessie's relationship was quite funny and over the top and intense, which kind of scared Ron a bit. That was easy to play. It was quite an awkward scene to do, though, because we'd only known each other for, like, two days and one of the first things we shot was the kissing scene. At first, we were quite self-conscious, because the set we shot in was filled with people, so that

was embarrassing, but we got through it."

EMMA WATSON: "I got along very well with Jessie Cave, who plays Lavender. There's a great scene where Hermione and Lavender are fighting over Ron, and we had good fun with that."

DAVID YATES: "The second half of *Half-Blood Prince* and the final third, in particular, gets quite emotional and intense, but I was kind of desperate to pull everything into the light in the first two thirds after *Order of the Phoenix*. There's a balance, and there's a balance in the books that Jo finds particularly easily between the wit and the entertainment and the fun, and some fairly dark stuff. We tried to follow her lead in the movies."

DANIEL RADCLIFFE: "The core of *Half-Blood Prince* is paranoia. It's a very, very strong theme in this film, because it's all about Harry's increasing paranoia about Draco Malfoy becoming a member of the Death Eaters. That's part of it, and it's a theme that's part of all of the films, really. The image of Dumbledore knowing all of that is a very, very sad one, because he carries on anyway. He doesn't give up. He absolutely fights to the last minute to try and leave behind him everything that's necessary to eventually lead to Voldemort's undoing. Those are probably the two things at the heart of this film."

DAVID HEYMAN: "*Half-Blood Prince* is the final chapter in Harry's education, as it were, and Dumbledore's preparation for Harry. At the end of it, Dumbledore effectively passes the mantle on to Harry as being the one who can take on Voldemort. In a way, it's the completion of the education of Harry Potter that leads on to the final films."

TOP 12 WILIEST WIZARDS

THE GUYS WHO PUT A SPELL ON US

by Jeff Bond

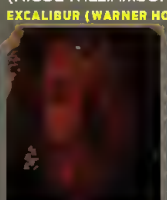
TIM THE ENCHANTER (JOHN CLEESE)

MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL (SONY PICTURES HOME VIDEO)

He could summon fire without flint or tinder but even this mighty, pyrotechnic wizard was no match for the most dangerous rabbit ever depicted on film. With his ram's horned hoodie and firebomb-throwing staff, John Cleese's Tim cut an impressive figure on film, and as King Arthur himself noted, "What an eccentric performance!" It doesn't hurt that *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* still ranks as one of the funniest and most quotable movies ever made, with a depiction of the Middle Ages that was dead-on in its focus on, well, filth.

MERLIN (NICOL WILLIAMSON)

EXCALIBUR (WARNER HOME VIDEO)



Merlin is certainly the most famous wizard in culture — after all, he was a household name before the Wizard of Oz or Gandalf were even invented, let alone put on film. There have been numerous portrayals of Merlin on film but this is our favorite: Nicol Williamson's chrome-domed, fiery and mesmerizing incarnation in John Boorman's dream-like meditation on Camelot and the court of King Arthur (Nigel Terry). Williamson could turn the mumbo-jumbo of "the charm of making" into eerie poetry, terrorize the devious Morgana (Helen Mirren) with blood-red dragon eyes and make stirring battlefield speeches that would do Kenneth Branagh proud.

STEPHEN STRANGE (BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH)

DR. STRANGE (BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT)

Born from the feverish imaginations of Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, Marvel's master of magic seemed like a longshot to join the Avengers and other superheroes on the big screen until the ingenious idea of

casting Benedict Cumberbatch occurred to somebody. Strange's solo film succeeded both on its acid trip, Escher-like visuals and Cumberbatch's portrayal of an egotistical surgeon saved by sorcery after losing his surgical skills in a car accident.

ULRICH (RALPH RICHARDSON)

DRAGONSLAYER (PARAMOUNT)

In this underrated medieval special effects thriller, Ralph Richardson's dotty Ulrich goes Obi-Wan Kenobi one better by dying early in the film at the hands of an evil henchman, then resurrecting himself before the spectacular dragon-slaying finale, the better to help out his Skywalker-like apprentice (Peter MacNicol). Ulrich's best line (just after his resurrection): "You didn't happen to bring anything to eat, did you?"

GANDALF (IAN MCKELLEN)

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING (WARNER HOME VIDEO)

Ian McKellen has now played Gandalf so many times it's hard to remember when he might have seemed a radical choice for Peter Jackson's epic film adaptation of Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" books. Prior to *LOTR*, McKellen was best known for his villainous interpretations of Magneto in the *X-Men* movies and the film version of Shakespeare's *Richard III*. But he brought wit, unpredictability and warmth to a character who is really the blueprint for all movie wizards.

OBI-WAN KENOBI (ALEC GUINNESS)

STAR WARS: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY (20TH CENTURY FOX HOME VIDEO)

Technically, he's a wizened Jedi Knight, but Alec Guinness' "wise old man of the desert" in George Lucas' original 1977 *Star Wars* is really a space fantasy blend of Gandalf and Merlin. Guinness brought classic movie class to what might have been regarded as cheap pulp at the time, although the great actor apparently grew tired of being identified with the role and reportedly told a fan that he would sign an autograph "only if you promise never to watch that film again."

THE WIZARD (FRANK MORGAN)

THE WIZARD OF OZ (WARNER HOME VIDEO)

We're way past the time when everyone in America grew up watching this 1939 movie classic during its annual airing on network television, but the musical adaptation of L. Frank Baum's books about the land of Oz still possess cultural cache, and Frank Morgan's sputtering portrayal of a Kansas con-man masquerading as an all-powerful wizard still works as shorthand for every Emperor Has No Clothes world leader.

ALBUS DUMBLEDORE (RICHARD HARRIS, MICHAEL GAMBON)

HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE, HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE (WARNER HOME VIDEO)

Certainly rivaling the popularity of Ian McKellen's Gandalf (at least among Muggles), Albus Dumbledore proved himself a grandmaster chess

player when it came to fending off the machinations of He Who Must Not Be Named (spoiler: Voldemort) and all the related conspiracies slithering around Hogwarts. Played by two different actors (Harris died after his first two appearances, leaving French actor Gambon to take over the role), Dumbledore is a wizard for the ages.

SEVERUS SNAPE (ALAN RICKMAN)

HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE (WARNER HOME VIDEO)

Hogwarts' Potions Master and sometime Defence Against the Dark Arts professor, Snape earned his place on this list by being the most convincing double agent in the history of the Order of the Phoenix, going so far as to slay Dumbledore (apparently) in order to cement his loyalty to the evil Death Eaters. Rickman's imperious and sinister performance throughout the Harry Potter series had fans believing in his villainy in a characterization essential to the shocking developments of the final four films.

LO PAN (JAMES HONG)

BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA (20TH CENTURY FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT)

Perhaps the most proudly garish and irascible wizard in modern movie history, Lo Pan is an ancient Chinese warlord who just wants to settle down with a loving, contemporary bride, even if he has to bulldoze over problematic American tough guy Jack Burton (Kurt Russell) and all his friends to do it. Backed up by the Three Storms (minions with the power of thunder, lightning and rain), a floating, multi-eyed spy head and his own ability to fire lightning and laser beams out of his eyes, Lo Pan is intimidating, but James Hong's hilariously grumpy performance also makes him charmingly pathetic.

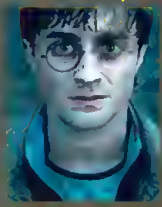
SARUMAN (CHRISTOPHER LEE)

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS (WARNER HOME VIDEO)

Best known for his work as Count Dracula in the British Hammer horror films (an association that long angered the towering, regal actor), Christopher Lee pulled off an astonishing career resurrection through his intimidating appearance as the dark wizard Saruman in Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* films. Although he worked steadily throughout his career, Lee had been relegated to cameos in films like *1941* and *Sleepy Hollow*, but his appearance (at almost 80) as Saruman was so gripping that it led to his casting as Count Dooku in the *Star Wars* prequels and numerous additional appearances as the flowy maned, black-eyed Saruman, leader of a terrifying orc army and a rare figure who could go wizard-to-wizard with Gandalf the Grey.

HARRY POTTER (DANIEL RADCLIFFE)

HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS PART 1 (WARNER HOME VIDEO)

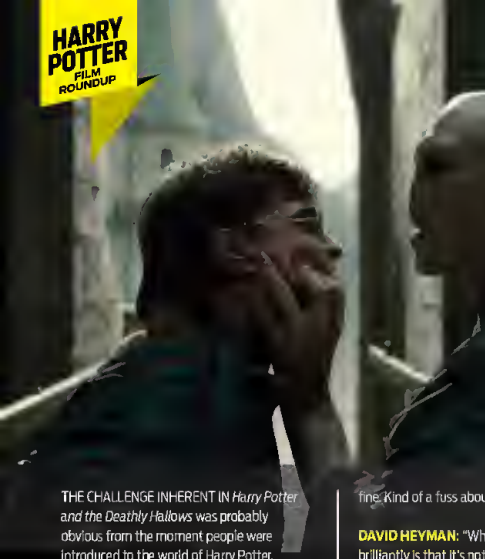


He doesn't rock a hipster beard or peaked hat, but we have to give young Harry Potter props for going wand-to-wand with Lord Voldemort and solving pretty much every mystery ever to haunt Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

by Edward Gross

HARRY POTTER AND THE

THE DEATHLY HALLOWS PARTS 1 & 2 (2010, 2011)



THE CHALLENGE INHERENT IN *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* was probably obvious from the moment people were introduced to the world of Harry Potter. Everything that had preceded it was leading up to what would have to be a climactic battle between the boy wizard and his sworn enemy, Voldemort. On the film side of things, there was the additional challenge of making what would feel like an organic two-part adventure.

DANIEL RADCLIFFE: "The first part is an exploration of character and how these characters react to one another in a totally different environment. The second part of it starts out as a heist movie and turns into a war film. There are many different phases to the book, but the progression is so natural and exciting that I don't think too many people were distracted by the fact that the film does move from so many different environments and so many different kinds of tones and feels to it."

EMMA WATSON: "The second part moves at breakneck speed and it doesn't let the audience breathe for two hours. Lots of action, very exciting, amazing visual effects—the first one is more psychological."

RUPERT GRINT: "The romance between Ron and Hermione really starts to happen in *Deathly Hallows*. I was really worried about that, because it just felt like it was wrong. But David Yates was really good about it; he gave us a long chat before we kissed and it was fine. Kind of a fuss about nothing."

DAVID HEYMAN: "What I think Jo did so brilliantly is that it's not an action-filled climax. It really comes from the very best place, which is from emotion and character. I think that's where Jo really succeeded brilliantly in the seventh book. There's that whole sequence with the figures from Harry's past, those who have died at Voldemort's hands, who are standing by him as he prepares. It's just beautiful. That's the strength of these films and the books — for all the magic, fantasy and visual effects, what people really connect with are the characters."

DAVID BARRON (PRODUCER): "The key thing is that we have spent eight films at that point leading up to Harry and Voldemort's final meeting, and the emotional element of that and their physical battle couldn't be overshadowed by 10 million Death Eaters. We had to be careful. There was a balance to be found there."

DAVID HEYMAN: "One of our big concerns was doing the ending of the story justice. We made a little more of the Voldemort/Harry fight than in the book. In the book it's over like that! [*snaps fingers*] We felt for film reasons we wanted to expand on that a little bit — with Jo's blessing, of course."

DAVID YATES: "I changed their final battle from the book. I thought it was more important to have them face each other away from everybody else. Harry lures Voldemort into the destroyed castle and I wanted them to have a big fight. I figured we'd waited so many movies for this, you just didn't want to sort of end it in the Great Hall with them circling each other. So we go off, we have a big fight and allowed them to express their sense of rage against each other and the hatred for one another."

It is that battle and an epilogue set in the future that brings the saga of *Harry Potter* to an end, though in a sense it's begun anew with *Fantastic Beasts*.

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OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF MUGGLES

A *Harry Potter* superfan on her favorite moments from the series.

by Kate Swan

HARRY POTTER & THE SORCEROR'S STONE

(1997)

Welcome to the story of "the boy who lived" where young Harry Potter first discovers the incredible world of magic and muggles.

Magical Momant: When Harry gets taken out of class to join the Quidditch Team and discovers he has a faculty for the sport in which students try to capture a snitch on flying brooms.

HARRY POTTER & THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

(1996)

Harry, Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley venture into the past of Lord Voldermort and discover some horrible secrets about the history of Hogwarts.

Magical Momant: The flashbacks give us a more in-depth look at what we might face next as we discover the true secret of Tom Riddle.

HARRY POTTER & THE PRISONER OF AZAKABAN

(1999)

Harry, who is being trained by the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, Remus Lupin, believes he's being hunted by Sirius Black. But Black is being hunted by the ethereal and terrifying dementors.

Magical Moment: When Scabbers, Ron's pet rat, is revealed to be the treacherous Peter Pettigrew.

HARRY POTTER & THE GOBLET OF FIRE

(2000)

Harry must face challenges including dragons, mer-people and friendship drama when the TriWizard Tournament comes to Hogwarts.

Magical Moment: When a fourth champion, Harry Potter, is chosen from the goblet of fire to participate in the TriWizard tournament, the mysteries begin.

HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX

(2003)

Harry joins The Order of the Phoenix, which his late parents belonged to along with Sirius Black and Severus Snape.

Magical Momant: The introduction of my favorite – and least favorite – new Harry Potter character, Bellatrix Lestrange, a character who truly delights in her own destructive evil.

HARRY POTTER & THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE

(2005)

When Harry joins potions class late, some weird things start to happen, including the unearthing of the mysteries of the Half-Blood Prince.

Magical Momant: We learn more about a beloved character, Severus Snape, who reveals his own dark and secret legacy here.

HARRY POTTER & THE DEATHLY HOLLOWS

(2007)

The boy who lived must confront Lord Voldermort for the last time in the Battle of Hogwarts and he faces challenges beyond belief where he finally learns the true power of the Chosen One.

Magical Momant: When the dead return for the final installment of the *Harry Potter* saga, it provides a satisfying coda for this remarkable book series.

HARRY POTTER & THE CURSED CHILD

(2016)

The eighth installment of the seven-book series takes old and new fans on a journey through the slithering side of Hogwarts in a theatrical script by Jack Thorne based on J.K. Rowling's original story.

Magical Moment: Albus Severus Potter and Scorpius, the children of Harry and Draco Malfoy, use the polly-juice potion to transform into the likeness of their fathers.

FANTASTIC BEASTS & WHERE TO FIND THEM

(2016)

The spin-off movie featuring Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne), who must find his missing beasts in 1930s Manhattan. The first film written by J.K. Rowling herself.

Magical Moment: When Jacob Kowalski (Dan Fogler) brings a box of sweets to get a job. OK, maybe it's really the reveal of Johnny Depp as Grindelwald at the end.

KATE SWAN IS AN 11-YEAR-OLD *HARRY POTTER* (AND *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER*) SUPERFAN WHO OWNS ALL THE BOOKS, BLU-RAYS AND A TON OF OTHER POTTERWORLD EPHEMERA AS WELL AS A FEW POTIONS OF HER OWN.

The *Harry Potter* books and *Fantastic Beasts & Where to Find Them* are all available at Walmart and Walmart.com.

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THINK DEADLY

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WB GAMES

IOI

Demo Island Discs

THE BEST OF THIS FALL'S ULTRA HIGH-DEF DELIGHTS.

by Mark A. Altman

PLANNING TO IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS with a state-of-the-art home theater system, 4K widescreen television, wall-rumbling Dolby Atmos speaker system and awesome new UHD player or gaming system with HDR and Dolby Vision? Here are some recent movie titles in ultra high definition that are sure to showcase your tech to maximum advantage while entertaining all the movie lovers in your life. Popcorn not included.

Mission: Impossible
Mission: Impossible 2
Mission: Impossible III
Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol
Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation
(PARAMOUNT HOME VIDEO)

While most franchises usually prove the law of diminishing returns, Paramount's *Mission: Impossible* film series has proven the opposite, with virtually every film improving on the one that preceded it (with the exception of the *Notorious*-tinged *M:I 2*, which does have the virtue of having been directed by John Woo in his prime). Although the early entries in the *M:I* series only date back to the mid-'90s, both films were in desperate need of new digital makeovers and they get it with Paramount Home Video's terrific new release of the entire series on 4K, including the nail-biting Brad Bird entry, 2011's *Ghost Protocol* and 2015's action-packed thriller from director Christopher McQuarrie, *Rogue Nation*, which is the only film that gets a new Dolby Atmos sound mix, although the multi-channel mixes are fairly aggressive on all the previous films as well. While there's a dearth of new special features (although legacy exclusive content is included, a nice bonus on *Rogue Nation*), all the titles are loaded, and each film comes with a digital code so you can download it to your digital storage locker, where it will look and sound better than ever. Mission: accomplished.

Thor: Ragnarok
Black Panther
(BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT)

The last year has proven a treasure trove of success for the MCU, and while *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* marked the studio's coming out party on 4K, it's *Thor: Ragnarok* and *Black Panther* that really deliver the action. *Ragnarok* once again proves the elasticity of the MCU by delivering a candy-colored comedy that also plumbs the darkness inherent in the destruction of Asgard, thanks to a malevolent turn from Cate Blanchett's Hela. *Black Panther*, by contrast, delivers a thoroughly engaging, inventive new take on a superhero film courtesy of co-writer/director Ryan Coogler (following up his equally satisfying *Creed*) in which the fate of the world is mercifully not at stake. The film is populated by a diverse tapestry of sensational characters and a riveting performance from Michael B. Jordan as the film's villain, Killmonger. *Ragnarok* is lighter on special features, though it does boast some fun deleted scenes, but *Black Panther* is loaded with bonus content. Not only are these both among the two finest films in MCU history, their respective UHD Dolby Vision debuts are immensely satisfying, with muscular Atmos sound and fine 4K transfers that will leave you chanting, "Wakanda Forever!"

Star Wars: The Last Jedi

(BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT)

Despite being one of the more polarizing *Star Wars* films, *The Last Jedi* makes the franchise's debut on the UHD format, and it's breathtaking. A gorgeous transfer of a magnificent *Star Wars* film with some of the best special features to ever grace a franchise release, particularly the feature-length documentary, "The Director and the Jedi," a candid look at the making-of the film that doesn't spare the drama between Rian Johnson and Mark Hamill for Luke's presumed swan song. Not since "The Beginning" on the original DVD release of *The Phantom Menace* has a *Star Wars* home video release offered such an insightful behind-the-scenes feature. There's also the welcome inclusion of some superb deleted scenes, most of which should have stayed in the film, particularly a confrontation between John Boyega Finn's and Gwendoline Christie's Phasma. Tech credits are all first rate and do justice to the movie's rich cinematography.

The Matrix

(WARNER BROS. HOME ENTERTAINMENT)

Whoa, Indeed! The perpetual DVD and Blu-ray demo disc finally comes to 4K with a stunning, ultra high-def transfer of the 1997 sci-fi classic in which Keanu Reeves' Neo finds out his mundane life is really a computer simulation and he's, in fact, a human battery for a post-apocalyptic machine race. The Wachowski brothers forever changed the genre with this explosive and intelligent sci-fi masterpiece, and even though its bag of tricks—such as bullet time action and gravity-defying martial arts—aren't nearly as fresh as they were 20 years ago, the films are still intelligent and satisfying. Mastered in Dolby Vision with a re-mixed Dolby Atmos sound mix, it's never looked better at home either. The package also includes a remastered Blu-ray version along with a litany of legacy special features, including eclectic commentary tracks and a digital code to download to your Vudu digital storage locker. Get it today, Mr. Anderson...

Game of Thrones: Season One

(HBO HOME ENTERTAINMENT)

Despite having already been issued several times in a variety of formats and special editions, you'll be shocked to see how great the first season of *Game of Thrones* looks in ultra high-def as you watch it from your own Iron Throne. Westeros simply looks amazing in this Dolby Vision encode, and the epic series is well served by its thunderous Atmos and Dolby DTS Digital Surround mixes. Although there are no new special features, it retains most of the great bonus content from previous editions, including the "Anatomy of an Episode," the "Making *Game of Thrones*" featurette and multiple audio commentaries. The night is dark, but the only terror here is how good the groundbreaking HBO television series looks in UHD.

Grease

(PARAMOUNT HOME VIDEO)

Grease is still the word as the 1978 movie musical comes to ultra high-def. Based on the toe-tapping Broadway show, director Randal Kleiser did a remarkable job bringing the popular musical to the screen with a first-rate cast toplined by Olivia Newton-John and John Travolta. The HDR-mastered disc includes a number of fun special features to celebrate the film's 40th anniversary, including a sing-along track, alternate main title sequence and deleted scenes. A film we'll always remain hopelessly devoted to, never more so than to this 4K UHD version, its best release ever.

Red Sparrow

(FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT)

There are a nice array of special features in this release, including some fairly substantive featurettes about the making of this espionage thriller from *Hunger Games* series director Francis Lawrence, including director commentary and deleted scenes. Based on the original novel, *Red Sparrow* stars the always reliable Jennifer Lawrence as a Russian ballerina who, after breaking her leg while performing, is trained to be a seductive secret agent. But this is no distaff James Bond (or even *Atomic Blonde*) and whatever its failings, the 4K disc shows off the UHD format at its best with vivid, inky blacks, courtesy of HDR, and a subtle but effective sound mix. All in all, this little sparrow flies.

Tomb Raider

(WARNER HOME VIDEO)

Warner Bros. successfully reboots the long-running video game franchise with a new origin story that re-proportions the iconic character into a more grounded and realistic movie heroine. While it lacks the compelling thrills of movie classics such as *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, this reboot boasts some solid performances, especially from Oscar winner Alicia Vikander as Lara herself, who travels halfway around the world to investigate the disappearance of her father, played charismatically, as always, by The *Wire's* Dominic West. The true joy of watching *Tomb Raider* at home, though, is the absolutely stunning 4K Dolby Vision image, with its pristine picture and thunderous Dolby Atmos sound mix, which vividly illustrates what an improvement UHD can be even over standard Blu-ray.

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Harry Potter: WIZARDS UNITE

Harry Potter: Wizards Unite aims to cast spell on mobile gamers

by Matt Cabral

THE SUMMER OF 2016 SAW gamers, non-gamers and pretty much everyone and their mobile gadget-owning grandma catching colorful monsters in *Pokémon GO*. As accessible as it was addictive, the iOS and Android phenomenon represented one of those rare cases when video games crossed over into the mainstream, recruiting complete newcomers to interactive entertainment.

Those same fans who spent countless hours collecting magical creatures in *Pokémon GO* could soon be catching fantastic beasts in *Harry Potter: Wizards Unite*. Spawned from a partnership between Portkey Games — the Warner Bros. label dedicated to developing titles based on J.K. Rowling's Wizarding World—and Niantic, Inc.—the studio behind *Pokémon GO*—the upcoming game is all but guaranteed to see Potterheads waving their mobile phones around like magic wands.

You'd have more luck snagging a golden snitch from the sky than scoring deep-diving details on the upcoming project, but we know Niantic's involvement promises to bring much of its *Pokémon GO* DNA to *Wizards Unite*. The new game set in the popular wizarding universe will leverage a similar augmented reality platform, meaning players will explore their real-world surroundings and environments using their mobile devices' cameras and location-tracking technology.

Of course, coming 2+ years after *Pokémon GO* filled parks with rookie monster hunters, the new game will also represent an evolution in the tech previously used. Specifics are scarcer than the rarest of Chocolate Frog Cards, but Niantic has promised the "next step" in the evolution of AR mobile entertainment. "*Harry Potter: Wizards Unite* will leverage the full stack of the Niantic Platform, while also providing an opportunity to pioneer all new technology and gameplay mechanics."

While most fans would eagerly eat up a wizard-flavored version of *Pokémon GO*, the project will offer much more than a pretty Potter paint job. It's been confirmed players will explore their real-world neighborhoods and cities—as they do in *Pokémon GO*—but they'll also learn to cast spells, embark on adventures, discover universe-expanding artifacts, find and fight legendary beasts, and team up with fellow wizard-wannabes to thwart the most powerful of magical monsters.

> LEARN TO CAST SPELLS, EMBARK ON ADVENTURES, DISCOVER UNIVERSE-EXPANDING ARTIFACTS, FIND AND FIGHT LEGENDARY BEASTS, AND TEAM UP WITH FELLOW WIZARD-WANNABES TO THWART THE MOST POWERFUL OF MAGICAL MONSTERS.

Harry Potter: Wizards Unite will also have some sort of progression path, as fans will be able to master spells and level up their wizarding status. Additionally, familiar characters will play an integral role in the experience, but there's no word yet on which iconic friends or foes we might run into while wielding our wand around town. Portkey is also working on a number of other Potter projects, some of which could potentially tie into the new mobile entry.

Potter Meets *Pokémon Go*-like gameplay in a potentially addictive new app.

Whether you're a hardcore *Harry Potter* fan, augmented reality geek or a mobile gamer craving your next creature-collecting fix, *Wizards Unite* should fit the bill when it casts its spell later this year.

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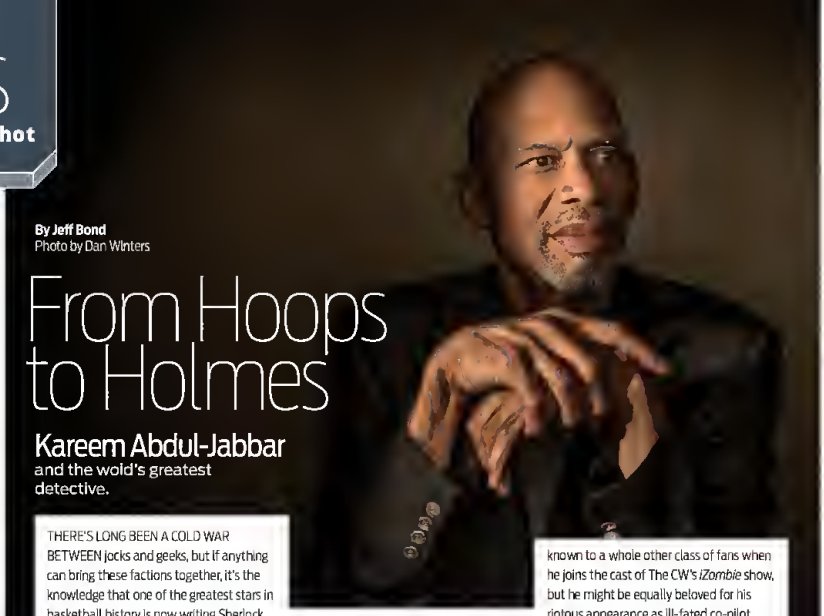


By Jeff Bond
Photo by Dan Winters

From Hoops to Holmes

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

and the wold's greatest detective.

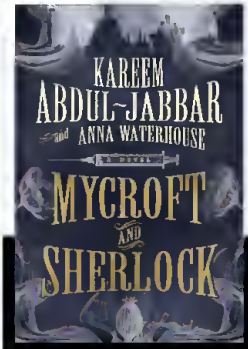
THERE'S LONG BEEN A COLD WAR BETWEEN jocks and geeks, but if anything can bring these factions together, it's the knowledge that one of the greatest stars in basketball history is now writing Sherlock Holmes novels.

Working with screenwriter Anna Waterhouse, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar recently added to his own literary output of historical works, essays and children's books with two novels focusing on Sherlock's older—and smarter—brother Mycroft, beginning in 2015 with *Mycroft Holmes* and now with a new novel, *Mycroft and Sherlock*. Writing Holmesian fiction had been an ambition for the author, political commentator and former athlete for years, but he needed the right partner—and the right focus. "There are many variations of Sherlock," he says of the famous Baker Street detective. "I wasn't interested in joining a crowded field, and I was always intrigued by this older brother whom Sherlock himself said was 'smarter' than he was. [Mycroft] was also in the center of British government when Great Britain was the most powerful country in the world."

Abdul-Jabbar also added another key character: Cyrus Douglas, Mycroft's closest friend whose family is from Trinidad. Douglas can match Mycroft's deductive mind and handle himself in a brawl as well, and as a man of color, his character opens up the stories to social commentary that's unique for Holmesian fiction. "Our Douglas was not created to be a sidekick," the author says. "We felt we owed it to him to create him as a complete character with his unique vision of the world. We decided early on that he would also be the heart and conscience of this duo. Also, we wanted to take characters whose adventures dealt mostly with a white view of the world (Victorian England, in this case) and introduce people of color — Trinidadians in the first book, Chinese in the second — and say something about their lives because they were part of the same history but were rarely written about."

By introducing Sherlock Holmes in Mycroft and Sherlock, Abdul-Jabbar and Waterhouse explore the relationship — not always an easy one — between the two brothers, and lay the foundation for key elements of the Arthur Conan Doyle stories that will take place with the characters as older, mature men.

If you're shocked that a basketball legend is into something as geeky as Sherlock Holmes, you shouldn't be. "I have a lot of geeky interests," Abdul-Jabbar says. "I collect Western memorabilia. I love numismatics, the study of coins. I also have non-geeky interests, such as a very large jazz collection. I consider myself quite knowledgeable in the field." He'll soon be known to a whole other class of fans when he joins the cast of The CW's *iZombie* show, but he might be equally beloved for his riotous appearance as ill-fated co-pilot Roger Murdock in the 1980 Zucker Bros. disaster movie spoof *Airplane!* "The Zucker brothers originally wanted Pete Rose for the role but Rose couldn't do it," Abdul-Jabbar says. "It was actually amazing to me that Peter Graves was there, Jimmy Walker, all the various character actors that I had long admired. They were all such pros, so very easy to work with. Nobody had any primadonna fits; we all just worked together to try to make the director happy... and we did."



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